

**City of Rockville Commission on the Environment
Recommendation to the Mayor and Council
on the
Refuse and Recycling Program Changes
February 20, 2007**

Issue

The City Staff have recommended changes to the current Refuse and Recycling program. The findings of a recently conducted pilot have shown over 80 percent of participants endorsing the program. The program under one recommended structure could save the City over \$700,000 dollars annually.

Recommendation:

In light of the potential for decreased worker injury, significant cost savings, and a lessened impact on the environment—through less dumping, better capture of waste streams for improved recycling, cleaner air through transport system efficiencies as well as other mitigating effects-- the Commission on the Environment supports changing the program with the following considerations:

Collection: Semi-automated with wheeled carts in 4 different sizes.

Exception: Rockville citizens who demonstrate they meet threshold criteria for special consideration such as physical disability and certain residential developments where HOA restrictions and other physical attributes restrict the use of carts.

Collection Frequency: Once per week.

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Recycling: Single stream once per week semi-automated pick-up.

Rates: Variable rate depending on amount of trash generated according to bin size selected by resident (4 size options available).

Overflow: Any refuse exceeding cart space must be placed in specially marked bags or commercial bags with affixed "City of Rockville" tag purchased at the City cashier's office (rates to be determined after appropriate research).

Exception: Recommend that the city consider "trash holidays" not unlike "tax holidays" where a reasonable overflow amount is allowed at holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and/or July 4th. Excessive behavior would still pay, but a reasonable ramp up (1 overflow bag) would be anticipated and allowed.

Bulk Collection: Quarterly, but must call to reserve. (Rather than trucks going out to all neighborhoods and not knowing how much there will be to pick up, they would instead go only to the houses that have made appointments, and know beforehand exactly what/how much they will be picking up)

Exception: The Commission expresses reservation about limits per year. In communities with high percentages of non-owner occupants, bulk disposals can be frequent in leased/rental units. The burden of disposing of this bulk material will shift to

the HOAs and other community groups to take action. Most communities would not tolerate bulk items left for 3 months where occupants are no longer residents. This aspect of the recommendation should be examined further.

Hazardous Waste: Quarterly, but must call to reserve (with amounts/types).
Exception: The city should study the consideration of drop-off points for small household hazardous materials such as small batteries, CFLs, etc. to promote proper recycling of these materials. For example, improper disposal of CFLs can lead to increased mercury releases.

Seasonal Leaf Collection: Support change to automated system.

Yard waste: Support change to automated system.

The Commission believes that following these recommendations, the City would join other communities in decreasing their impact on the environment. Fewer trucks in the fleet, potential decrease in trash reaching landfills, and increased recycling may all be byproducts of a more sustainable refuse program for our City. We would further encourage the City to move toward a truly “integrated and sustainable” recycling program by also instituting “green purchasing” policies helping to support the development and use of products made from recycled materials in all City facilities and through its contracting activities.